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Implications of Soviet Invasion of Poland

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Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Poland [redacted]

Summary

The Soviet leadership almost certainly recognizes that a Warsaw Pact invasion of Poland would encounter significant, widespread Polish resistance by civilians and possibly by some military forces. Not only would it require large invasion forces, but it would also mire some Soviet military units for years in occupation and policing tasks. Soviet prospects for quickly establishing a viable indigenous vassal regime would be dim, thus probably involving the Soviets directly in administering Poland for the indefinite future. Civilian morale and productivity would tumble and the economy would fall into further disarray. The important role of Poland's armed forces in Warsaw Pact war plans would be seriously undermined even if these forces stood aside and acquiesced in a Soviet invasion. If they actively resisted, their current principal Warsaw Pact role would be at an end for a long period of time [redacted]

The resulting costs for the USSR would be very large. They would include:

- A global propaganda defeat occasioned by the intervention, arrest of "counterrevolutionaries," and spectacle of Soviet troops rooting Solidarity elements out of Polish factories.
- The need to maintain a large Soviet occupation force and to replace the Polish ground force divisions opposite NATO with Soviet combat troops.
- Long-term subsidization of the Polish economy, which already constitutes a drain at the current level of $4 billion per year. Even if Poland's fixed capital sustained no damage, this drain would at least double if the Soviets sought merely to keep economic activity from collapsing.
- Imposition of Western sanctions at a level and for a duration considerably greater than after Afghanistan. Particularly painful would be constraints on access to Western grain.
- A political setback to Soviet efforts to split the Western Alliance.
- The need to absorb at least some of the economic burden imposed on other East European countries by the invasion, loss of Polish deliveries, and Western strictures on East-West trade.

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- A partial, if only temporary, blunting of Soviet initiatives in the Third World—including the Middle East.
- A possible acceleration of defense cooperation between the United States and China.

There are offsets to these costs, some of which might be actual gains:

- The invasion would shore up Soviet influence in other East European countries, at least in the short run.
- Many West Europeans would conclude that the invasion had, at least over the medium term, weakened the Warsaw Pact and thus reduced the urgency of heightened Western defense measures.
- An invasion would not destroy West European financial and industrial interest in trade with the Soviet Union, and this interest would—after initial West European agreement to selected commodity embargoes—begin to reassert itself.

Two additional serious penalties the Soviets theoretically could be made to pay if they did invade Poland would be:

- The loss of key Western imports, especially a global embargo on grain and severe constaints on steel products. If the Soviets could be persuaded that they faced a high risk of such a loss, it would act as a far greater deterrent than likely NATO actions, heightened COCOM controls, or imposition of Western financial restraints. At present, however, Moscow has reason to doubt that such a really tough Western embargo would be politically sustainable for long.

- Placing Eastern Europe under the Western sanctions umbrella. This could effectively double the impact of sanctions on the USSR. Measures against Eastern Europe, though, would be the toughest to obtain from US allies.

Actions along these lines taken by the US administration to deter a Soviet invasion, or raise its costs after the fact, could prove counterproductive both from the standpoint of domestic US politics and of US–West European relations. Moscow would hope, in particular, that heavyhanded US pressure on Western Europe to heighten its defense effort would deepen fissures in the Atlantic Alliance.

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Implications of a Soviet Invasion of Polan[redacted]

In a recent typescript memorandum,[1] the National Foreign Assessment Center examined what the consequences might be if the Soviets did *not* intervene militarily in Poland. The present companion paper, equally conjectural, examines what the consequences might be if the Soviets *did* invade Poland. This paper also assesses the efficacy of various steps the West might take to deter or increase the costs of a Soviet intervention. Clearly, the Soviet leadership would have to expect a degree of resistance to invasion far surpassing that encountered in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. By the same token, the costs of invasion would also be far higher than they were previously; indeed, the magnitude of these costs no doubt explains in large part why the Soviets have not already intervened. What the costs would be and how the Soviets might perceive them are the focal issues considered in the analysis below[redacted]

How Much Resistance to a Soviet Invasion?

The extent of Polish military and civilian armed resistance to an outright Soviet invasion would depend on a number of factors, including the intensity of Polish anti-Russian sentiment, the disposition of Polish armed forces, directives from the political and military leadership to resist or not, the position adopted by the Church, the military's command and control over individual units, and the degree of brutality demonstrated by invading Soviet forces. We believe it is likely that:

- The Polish political and military leadership would urge the population not to resist and would either issue orders to military units to remain in garrison or not issue orders at all.
- The leaders of the Polish Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II would immediately condemn an invasion but would almost certainly advise the population against armed resistance.
- Nevertheless, virulent anti-Russian feelings widespread within the population at large and in the military, exacerbated by initial bloodshed, would generate powerful grassroots pressures to fight back.
- The degree of organized resistance by ground force units would depend on decisions made by divisional and regimental commanders. Some would probably decide to resist. Without organization and control under central authority, however, open military resistance to a Warsaw Pact invasion would be fragmented, not sustainable, and in the end largely ineffectual.

[redacted] 18 May 1981, *Liberalization in Poland: Impact and Implications*[redacted]

[redacted]

- Solidarity would call for a general srike, the occupation of all major factories, the hampering of Soviet troop movements, and prevention of seizures of food by occupying forces. There could also be coordinated acts of sabotage, such as flooding mines, cutting communications and rail lines, and banking blast furnaces in steel mills.

- There would also be substantial spontaneous active resistance to invading forces by the civilian population

Altogether then, we would anticipate significant and widespread resistance by civilians and possibly some military units with much bloodshed. While any overt resistance by Polish military units probably could not be sustained for more than a week or so, armed resistance would probably assume the form of guerrilla warfare or terrorism, and passive resistance would grow in intensity as the invasion phase merged into a Soviet occupation of Poland

The Soviet Assessment and Soviet Options

There is reason to believe that Soviet leaders may have felt at one time that if Warsaw Pact forces could be inserted into Poland in support of the introduction of martial law by the Polish regime itself, there might be less resistance—which in turn would permit the USSR to intervene with a smaller force. The Soviet leadership may also have entertained the possibility of a "creeping invasion" (beginning, perhaps, with a takeover of the main rail trunk lines linking the USSR with East Germany), or the possibility of a pro-Soviet military coup that could be supported with only a medium-size, Warsaw Pact interventionary force. However, we believe that by now the Soviets, in contemplating military intervention, no longer see any viable alternative to an outright invasion—staged, to be sure, with whatever "invitational" cover could be arranged

Given the Soviets' likely assessment of the substantial resistance that Pact forces would encounter, we believe they would feel compelled to employ a large invasion force of at least 30, and perhaps as many as 45, division

Early Soviet objectives would include the seizure of Warsaw, the neutralization of Polish political and military leaders, the arrest of some Solidarity officials and proreform members of the intelligentsia, and the establishment of a puppet regime. The Soviets would also seek to gain control of urban centers and seize lines of communications and other key military targets. They would move quickly to isolate Polish armed forces garrisons and discourage resistance through a rapid show of overwhelming military force.

They would also act quickly to put down any Polish units offering military resistance. This would be a large undertaking and, no matter how massive the intervention, there would be a high likelihood of substantial damage to the transportation system and other parts of the economic infrastructure of Poland.[redacted]

Between Invasion and Occupation

Solidarity's occupation of Poland's factories would pose the biggest problem for the Soviets in the immediate wake of the invasion. These enclaves would provide the focal point of resistance, giving heart to those fighting the Soviets, countering Soviet propaganda claims over factory radio-transmissions, and denying legitimacy to the quisling regime[redacted]

The Soviets could not rapidly or easily remove these centers of resistance. The quickest course would be to shell the factories, but this would inflame hatred of the Russian occupier still more, destroy production facilities, and further blacken the international image of the USSR. If Soviet troops were used to clean out the factories, this would take time and could become progressively bloody[redacted].

Poland in the Aftermath

Internal Security. Once the initial invasion period had ended, the Soviets would face monumental problems, and it seems almost inevitable that they would be dragged even deeper into fulfilling basic administrative tasks, including those in the security field. It is doubtful that the Polish police or military would be a reliable force for internal security duties, particularly if, as is likely, there were prolonged passive resistance. The Soviets would probably have to bear much of the burden for policing the population for an extended period[redacted]

Passive resistance and noncooperation with authorities would become the rule, but this would be punctuated with a substantial amount of violence against the Soviet occupiers and Polish "traitors." The Church would counsel against excessive violence but would be careful not to play a collaborationist role. Although Solidarity would probably be officially proscribed and limits would be placed on the Church, Solidarity would become the core for an extensive underground Polish society, providing a wide variety of services for the population ranging from underground schools to noncensored communication to organizing demonstrations, strikes, and other forms of opposition[redacted]

Regeneration of a Functioning Government. Obviously, the Soviets would prefer to use their own forces as a backup to new Polish party and government leaders who would take over the day-to-day governing of the country. Whether they would have more success in establishing such a functioning indigenous regime than they have had so far in Afghanistan is not certain. They would have difficulty finding enough quislings, especially if the intial invasion had been particularly bloody. The party, especially at the lower levels, would probably disintegrate, and much of the governmental apparatus would slide further into passivity or obstructionism. The Soviets could certainly not count on reestablishing a viable pro-Soviet regime with anything like the speed with which they did so in Czechoslovakia, and even the medium-to-longer-term chances of establishing a Kadar-type regime enjoying some legitimacy in the public eye would be slim. Thus, the Soviets would probably be heavily and directly involved in administering Poland for the indefinite future.

Economic Disarray. Probably the best economic situation the Soviets could hope for in the wake of intervention would be to encounter only general passivity in work places. Production in Polish industry would decline rapidly as morale and productivity fell to new lows. Critical bottlenecks soon would appear in essential services such as transportation and distribution. Civilian disruptions would be made worse by the military's prior claim on the transport network. Widespread hoarding and the withholding of output by private farmers would add to the shortages. Finally, foreign trade probably would quickly grind to a halt. Even if Western ships were willing to enter Polish waters, there would be no guarantee the ports would have the capacity to unload civilian cargoes or that the Poles would be working the docks. Acts of sabotage and damage to plant and equipment would of course make the economic plunge even steeper.

Consequences and Costs

The Warsaw Pact. Because Poland's role in Soviet plans for war against NATO is critical, a Soviet invasion could do substantial damage to the war-fighting capabilities of the Warsaw Pact. Poland's armed forces are the second largest in the Pact. Their principal wartime assignment is to form and command a military front (army group) by themselves. They are also assigned responsibility for supporting the wartime movement of Soviet troops and supplies through their territory and securing Soviet lines of communication to Central Europe. Their combat and logistic assignments exceed those of the Czechoslovak or East German forces and make Poland in some respects the most important of the USSR's Warsaw Pact allies.

Even if all Polish military units stood absolutely aside during a Soviet invasion (which we regard as unlikely), Moscow would not be able to interpret that passive response as ensuring the continuation of Poland's current role in Warsaw Pact plans for war. The Polish military is primarily a conscript force, and each year it experiences a nearly 50-percent turnover in its conscript troops. It also relies on mobilized reservists for much of its wartime strength. Thus the Polish armed forces in a subsequent wartime mobilization would be composed for the most part of troops who probably would share the antagonism of the Polish populace toward the Soviet invaders. The fact that the Polish military did not actively resist the invasion at the time it occurred would be no test of how future conscripts and reservists would respond in a crisis with NAT[redacted]

Acquiescence by the Polish military in a Soviet intervention almost certainly would lead to a drastic deterioration of morale, even for officers and NCOs, and to a loss of Polish popular support for the armed forces in general. As in Czechoslovakia after 1968, a Soviet invasion would probably cause massive resignations from the armed forces and continuing problems in recruiting qualified officers and NCOs. Consequently, the Polish military's combat capabilities would sharply decline, and Soviet expectations as to Poland's ability to contribute to Warsaw Pact military strength would be correspondingly reduced[redacted]

Resistance to a Soviet invasion by the Polish armed forces probably would put an end to Poland's crucial role in Warsaw Pact war plans for five to 10 years. Even if the resistance were localized and slight, it probably would convince the Soviets of the need for a thorough purge of the Polish military. Until this purge was completed, the Soviets would place little or no faith in the reliability of Poland's armed forces. Such a purge would take years to complete. This was true of the Soviet purge of the Czechoslovak armed forces after the invasion of 1968, when the Czechoslovak military offered no resistance to the Soviet invaders[redacted]

Finding an alternative means of fulfilling the wartime responsibilities now entrusted to the Poles would be difficult and costly for the USSR. Current Soviet plans for war are sufficiently flexible to allow for a somewhat lessened role for Polish combat forces. But the Soviets have not exercised plans for securing their lines of communication through Poland with their own troops and do not appear to have forces allocated or prepared to assume such support assignments. An invasion of Poland would certainly require Moscow to take on this task. Moscow might even have to compensate for the loss of most, if not all, of Poland's armed forces to the Warsaw Pact. These

forces number over 400,000 men in peacetime and would more than double in wartime. Replacing them would be a staggering task for the Soviets, and the difficulty would be all the greater in light both of the sizable additional postinvasion forces that would have to be committed simply to police the Poles, and of the need to maintain the USSR's current commitment of troops to Afghanistan.

Economic Costs. The most immediate cost for the Soviet economy—that of the invasion itself—would probably not loom large in Soviet eyes, even if the Poles offered substantial military resistance. A far more significant economic burden would be imposed by the large Soviet occupation force that would have to be kept in Poland, possibly for a long time, to cope with the widespread popular opposition—passive resistance, insurrection, and sabotage—that the Poles could be expected to mount. Maintenance of such a force, plus the need to replace Polish military forces opposite NATO, would require a major reordering of the Soviet force structure and missions. The increased force requirements would come at a time of growing Soviet manpower stringencies, especially inasmuch as the forces would have to be combat troops that would be drawn largely from the Slavic rather than the ethnic minority population. The cost implications of all these measures for the Soviet defense budget are difficult to estimate, but they would be substantial.

An additional, indirect cost of Soviet military action could be the impairment of the Soviet harvest. The harvest season runs from July through October, a period during which Soviet agriculture relies heavily on the military for help. Preemption by the military of much rolling stock and civilian vehicles would also cause extensive and prolonged dislocations in the already severely strained transportation system.

The most serious and longest lasting economic cost for the USSR, however, would be that imposed by the need to restore the Polish economy to some functioning basis and to sustain it at a level sufficient to reestablish some degree of political stability. This would be a painful but inescapable necessity for the Soviet leaders, since they would want, in the short term, to minimize the effects of the crisis on CEMA trade and economic activity and, in the long term, to shore up a badly shaken Warsaw Pact alliance.

The cost to the Soviet Union of subsidizing the Polish economy is already substantial: on the order of $4 billion this year. This cost would at least double if the Soviets did little more than provide enough grain and other foodstuffs to keep Polish consumption from dropping precipitously, and

enough energy and industrial materials to ensure that key Polish industries and mining operations were maintained. If the invasion resulted in extensive damage to fixed capital, the costs would be much greater still, as the restoration effort might then require rehabilitation of flooded mines and reconstruction of damaged plant and transport facilities.

Poland's hard currency debt service obligations would not need to become a burden on the Soviet treasury. Moscow would not want to see Poland default on its debt, since that would reflect badly on East European creditworthiness. But it might encourage Poland to declare a debt moratorium and to open discussions on rescheduling. At the same time, even a single Western creditor's demands could plunge Poland into default, and such a possibility cannot be ruled out.

Moscow is well aware that a bloody intervention in Poland would lead to the imposition of Western sanctions on the USSR. What costs these sanctions might impose would depend on their scope and duration. The United States by itself could do little to hurt the USSR. A tough sanctions program adopted jointly by the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, however, could exact a far stiffer price than did the post-Afghanistan sanctions in 1980. The strength and durability of allied cohesion on this issue would depend in part on how bloody the confrontation in Poland became.

A sanctions effort limited to denials of equipment and technology sales would not create much of a hardship, simply because few large projects are on the horizon. The notable exception is the proposed gas pipeline from West Siberia to Western Europe. It would be an early casualty of Western sanctions, putting a mid-1980s startup date completely out of reach. Particularly painful for the USSR would be constraints on its access to Western grain. Agreement among the US, Canada, the EC, and Australia to limit sales would leave only Argentina as a potential supplier (although even Buenos Aires has stated it would consider joining an embargo if the USSR invaded Poland). Western denials of industrial goods would also be costly to Soviet planners faced with a growing gap between domestic production and needs for items such as machinery, steel, and pipe and chemical feedstocks.

Impact on Soviet Relations With Western Europe. A Soviet invasion of Poland, particularly if it were bloody and actively resisted, and led to a protracted armed struggle, would destroy optimistic West European assumptions about an East-West security relationship that have persisted

since the early 1970s. In the short term, the Soviets realize, an invasion would heighten West European perceptions of a Soviet threat and seriously set back Moscow's efforts to weaken the Western Alliance. The Soviets would not believe, however, that an invasion would destroy West European hopes for eventual East-West rapprochement, or nullify the economic and political desires that drive West Europeans toward accommodation with Moscow.

The ebb and flow of Polish developments have given NATO some time to prepare its immediate reaction to an invasion. Moscow is probably aware that the allies have agreed on an economic and diplomatic sanctions posture, including trade curtailment, recall of ambassadors, and scuttling of the languishing Madrid review meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (although not of the Helsinki Final Act itself). While allied armed forces would be placed in a state of heightened readiness, giving NATO some enhanced military flexibility, Moscow would not anticipate that NATO would take any serious military actions.

West Europeans have viewed "detente"—the careful construction of ties meant to constrain and define the boundaries of East-West conflict—as making war in Europe less likely, and increasing mutual confidence in the motives and policies of competing powers. Some West Europeans have expected that detente would increase the Soviet sense of regional security enough so that Moscow would not need to fear social evolution within the Warsaw Pact.

A Soviet invasion of Poland would undermine these assumptions, reviving West European doubts about Soviet intentions, exacerbating West European perceptions of the Soviet threat, and thereby reducing public confidence in the East-West relationship. Detente, in the 1970s sense, would cease to exist.

The West Europeans, however, would feel a need to construct a new basis for East-West relations, and would begin to do so once the Polish situation had stabilized. Many would believe that a dialogue with the East was still necessary to reduce dangers of war. Some would argue that the Soviet invasion occurred within the USSR's own sphere of influence, and therefore constituted an understandable, if deplorable, act. A more common, if less immediate, reaction would be that economic interests required an East-West *modus vivendi*, despite the intrusion of military diplomatic shocks. Resumption of an East-West dialogue would not be far behind.

Soviet military intervention in Poland might help for a time to defuse West European opposition to NATO military modernization. The allies probably would agree—in principle—to accelerate implementation of Long-Term Defense Program goals. But the allies probably would not significantly increase their defense spending. While incremental adjustments in defense budgets would be possible as part of an initial, angry reaction to an invasion, few West Europeans would be willing to sacrifice social welfare and economic programs for the sake of a defense buildup. Indeed, on reflection, West European governments might well conclude that the invasion had, at least over the medium term, weakened the Warsaw Pact and thus reduced the urgency of heightened military spending. The allies perceive little benefit in a military buildup because they do not believe that they can match Soviet conventional strength, and do not want to increase reliance on nuclear weapons to counterbalance it. An invasion of Poland, therefore, would at best only temporarily help NATO's effort to deploy new long-range theater nuclear forces.

The West Europeans would retain their long-term interest in arms control. While an invasion would freeze or end existing arms control talks, the West Europeans would continue to believe that arms control offers the best road to military securty. LRTNF talks, even if suspended in the immediate aftermath of an invasion of Poland, would be quickly revived as a West European condition for missile deployment.

A similar pendulum swing would be exhibited in the area of East-West trade, since an invasion would not permanently destroy West European financial and industrial interest in such ties. Initially, the West Europeans would agree to selected commodity embargoes, although these would probably be of limited duration. Negotiations for the construction of plants, pipelines, and other major economic facilities probably would be suspended, but not permanently terminated. Although West European governments would agree to limited application of economic pressure, they are skeptical about the usefulness of broad economic sanctions. They have complained in the past that such measures hurt their own economies at least as much as they hurt the Soviet economy.

The extent of individual countries' financial exposure in Poland probably would have little impact on their initial reactions, since a debt moratorium would undoubtedly be declared. If default did occur, it would be unlikely to cause widespread bank failures or serious jeopardy to the international monetary system because central banks would step in.

A Soviet invasion of Poland could have a profoundly negative impact on the fortunes of West European Communist parties, which these parties would attempt to forestall. Italian Communist Party leaders have already strongly hinted that a Soviet invasion of Poland would lead the PCI to break relations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Spanish Communist Party, as well as the smaller British, Dutch, and Belgian parties, would strongly condemn an invasion. Even the French Communist Party would denounce an invasion; the legacy of its stance against the invasion of Czechoslovakia is the sole remaining source of the PCF's claim to "Eurocommunist" status. The PCF has already adopted a stronger anti-invasion line as part of the price for participation in the new French Government.

Other International Implications

In the short run at least, a Soviet invasion of Poland would shore up Soviet influence in other East European countries—which, of course, would have been one of the primary objectives behind the invasion. An invasion and subsequent rollback of reforms would put an end to any "spillover" effects of Poland, reinforce the more pro-Soviet elements within the other East European regimes, encourage the imposition of hardline internal policies, and strengthen pressures for still closer alignment with the USSR.

The main costs to the Soviets in Eastern Europe would probably be economic. An invasion would, for a prolonged period, further reduce Polish deliveries of coal and manufactured goods to some of the other East European countries (notably East Germany and Czechoslovakia), disrupting CEMA economic ties and forcing the East European trade partners of Poland to seek more costly substitutes. The capacity of the East European economies to cope with their economic difficulties by introducing modest reforms would probably be further inhibited. The East European countries could all expect to suffer from reduced credits from and trade with the West, although the severity of the impact would depend in part upon the enthusiasm with which individual East European regimes were seen in the West to have fulfilled their "fraternal obligations" in invading Poland. While the Soviets would undoubtedly be unwilling to underwrite all the costs to their allies of an invasion, they would probably be compelled to absorb some of the burden in response to pleas that failure on their part to do so might spread destabilization within the "Socialist Commonwealth."

Elsewhere in the world, the Soviets could count on few benefits from an invasion of Poland, although many of the costs would probably prove to be transitory. An invasion would obviously not improve the Soviet image within

the Third World and in the nonaligned movement—even if this had few operational consequences. An invasion might also have the effect of partially blunting Soviet initiatives in the Middle East and inspiring somewhat greater tolerance of a US military presence. Most importantly, from the Soviet standpoint, an invasion of Poland could lead to an acceleration of defense cooperation between the United States and China and, perhaps, to further crystallization of a "Beijing-Tokyo-Washington axis"

Costs and US Actions

While the present paper is premised on the assumption that the USSR *would* invade Poland and that the Soviet leadership would incur the costs outlined above, it is conceivable that some additional Western or US actions beyond those noted above could either enhance the deterrent nature of costs already anticipated by Moscow to follow from an invasion, or intensify these costs in the wake of an invasion. US leverage in either instance is quite restricted—both by the fact that many of the penalties the Soviets would have to pay would be independent of Western action, and by the limits of US influence over relations between US allies or third countries and the USSR.

From the standpoint of deterring a Soviet invasion, what is most important is sustaining Moscow's perception that those costs which *are* potentially within Washington's capacity to impose would in fact *be* imposed (and that they would not be imposed in the absence of an invasion). Deterrence, to the extent that the United States can effect it, depends on the Soviet leadership's reading of the US administration's willingness and political ability to get Congress and the American public lined up behind threatened responses to a Soviet invasion of Poland, and its ability to achieve and maintain agreement with allies over punitive actions. Similarly, further raising the costs of an invasion already unleashed by the Soviets would depend on sustaining the US reaction and that of allies and third countri

Potentially, the most profound additional deterrent against an invasion, and most serious further penalty the Soviets could be forced to pay if they did invade Poland, would not be possible NATO actions (which the Soviets would discount), heightened COCOM controls, or the imposition of Western financial strictures, but the anticipation or reality of losing most Western grain imports. The USSR faces a grain import requirement of perhaps 35 million tons a year, and an add-on of 8 million tons for Poland, assuming the latter is included in the Western embargo. Argentina in recent years has had an export capacity of only 14-15 million tons of coarse grain and wheat.

Thus even if Argentina failed to adhere to an embargo, denial of Western grain by the US, Canada, the EC, and Australia would constitute a major setback to Soviet consumption and the livestock sector. Moscow has reason to doubt, however, that such a comprehensive Western embargo would be politically sustainable for long in the face of tumbling prices in a world grain market that would quickly become glutted.

The West could effectively double the impact of sanctions on the USSR by placing Eastern Europe under a sanctions umbrella. Indeed, putting the burden of additional support for Eastern Europe on the USSR's shoulders at a time of increasing domestic economic stringency would prove far more disruptive to Soviet plans and options than would Western measures directed solely against Moscow. To the Soviet requirement of at least 40 million tons of Western grain would be added an East European requirement of about 15 million tons of grain. Eastern Europe also depends on the West for substantial amounts of industrial materials and advanced machinery and equipment. In terms of impact, its denial would be a multiple of the actual value of the trade lost. Only by supplying the Bloc from Soviet production could Moscow replace forgone Western trade; even if the USSR were willing, comparable replacements do not exist in a number of instances.

Measures against Eastern Europe, however, would also be the toughest to obtain. All the allies would be quick to note that these would undermine any movement toward greater liberalization in Eastern Europe, hurting countries the West has tried to wean away from Soviet dominance.

Moscow policymakers would certainly hope that actions taken by the US administration to deter a Soviet invasion of Poland or raise its costs after the fact would prove counterproductive. In the United States, they would expect substantial domestic opposition to be mounted by key groups whose interests would be affected by the imposition of various sanctions, and they might hope that attempts to push such sanctions through Congress would exacerbate cleavages within the government and weaken the present administration. In other Western countries, the Soviets could count on growing resistance to US efforts to employ the prospect or reality of a Soviet invasion of Poland to get allies to adopt extra sanctions beyond those already agreed upon, to further heighten military readiness, to increase defense spending, to deploy additional or new weapon systems, or to accept the abandonment of various arms control agreements or initiatives. Moscow would attempt to capitalize on this resistance to divide the Western Alliance.